THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

October/November 2025 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

Journey to Japan

by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy

In early August, I traveled to Japan with a small delegation from Worcester, Massachusetts for the 80th anniversaries of the US atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a trip made possible through my work at the Center for Nonviolent Solutions. My friend Charlie Washburn, a fellow parishioner at Saint Peter's Catholic Church, had the idea for the trip, which he envisioned as part of a larger project to re-animate nuclear disarmament efforts in Massachusetts. Charlie hoped for a representative delegation of eight or ten people from across the state. As August approached, only four of us were free to travel: Charlie, his wife Frances Anthes, textile artist Mihoko Wakabayashi, and myself.

Claire Schaeffer-Duffy, Frances Anthes, Charlie Washburn, and Mihoko Wakabayashi at Nagasaki's Peace Park

Our group shadowed the US Catholic Pilgrimage to Hiroshima and Nagasaki which traveled to Japan for a similar purpose. The week-long pilgrimage (August 4-11) was coordinated by Partnership for a World Without Nuclear Weapons (PPNW), which was founded in August 2023 by US and Japanese bishops from the nuclear weapons-affected dioceses of Santa Fe, Seattle, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki, in collaboration with several US Catholic and Japanese universities.

Catholic delegations have traveled to Japan to mark the Hiroshima and Nagasaki anniversaries ever since the Americans dropped their atomic bombs. This year's Pilgrimage of Peace was the largest and most varied. Its participants included university students, faculty, and staff, as

(Continued on Page 4)

Atonement

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

In the Catholic Sacrament of Reconciliation, divine forgiveness comes through an honest admission of wrongdoing, a sincere intention to avoid the sin in the future, and the completion of the penance given by the priest. The penance might entail recompense toward those harmed by the sin, but it could just as easily be a few Hail Mary's or an extra Mass.

Jews, who realize they have sinned, go a step farther by not only admitting wrongdoing and trying not to do it again, but also by atoning for the sin. Atonement involves not only seeking forgiveness, but also making restitution.

Americans are notorious for failing to admit wrongdoing or make restitution for mass violence. There were about ten million Native Americans in the United States in 1600 and only 300,000 in 1990. No US President has confessed that we committed genocide, and no restitution has been paid. Restitution for the ten million Africans who were enslaved here has also never been paid. Similarly, the US has not apologized or offered restitution for the killing of 500,000 people in the Philippines, 280,000 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 2.5 million in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, and 213,000 in Iraq, to name just some of the victims of US wars.

In the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, Jesus says: "**If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother or sister; then come and offer your gift.**" It's not enough to make an offering to

(Continued on Page 2)

Peacemakers

byAnne Craigmyle

Despairing poems aren't
the last chapter in these fights.
The fluttering of doves are:
new endings and prayers
like life jackets.

The colliding shorelines are ceasing.
Turbulent waters moving into
still waters
uniting us into stronger teams.

In ethereal places:
finding the way out of
a difficult maze.

Doom will not overtake us
or cause us to fall.
Peace will always be our
net in solidarity. Ω

Pablo Picasso

"People are tired of armaments and war, which release uncontrollable forces of tribalism and nationalism. These are dangerous and murderous forms of identity and above which we need to transcend, lest we unleash further violence upon the world. Acknowledge that our common humanity and human dignity is more important than our different religions and traditions. Recognize our life and the lives of others are sacred and that we can solve our problems without killing each other. Accept and celebrate diversity and otherness. Heal the old divisions and misunderstandings. Give and accept forgiveness and choose love, nonkilling, and nonviolence as ways to solve our problem." Ω

Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate – from her presentation at the 2017 United Nations Conference "Perspectives for a world free from Nuclear Weapons and for Integral Disarmament."

Atonement

(Continued from Page 1)

God or even to admit wrongdoing and ask God's forgiveness. We are called to reconciliation, without which we are only looking for cheap grace.

In 2023, when President Biden questioned Israeli tactics in Gaza, Prime Minister Netanyahu replied, "You carpet-bombed Germany, you dropped the atom bomb, a lot of civilians died." He could have said the Israeli response to Hamas' killing of 1,200 Israelis on October 7 was more lenient than the US response to the killing of 2,976 people on September 11, 2001. He would have been right too. We have mass murdered countless people without apology, but it must be noted that, in the aftermath of World War II, the US spent considerable dollars reconstructing Germany and Japan. We did not atone for our killing and destruction, nor did we make amends, but the gesture to those enemy nations went a long way toward establishing peaceful relations with both countries since then.

Let's not forget that on February 13, 1991, the US dropped "smart" bombs on Baghdad's Amiriyah Air Raid Shelter, incinerating at least 408 children, women, and men, and that on August 25, 2025, Israel bombed Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, Gaza. After rescue workers and reporters arrived, the Israelis bombed it again, killing at least 20 health workers and journalists. Deliberate attacks on civilians.

This brings us back to Gaza, a place Israel tormented for decades and then virtually obliterated. Time and time again throughout human history, actions like Israel's lead to vicious retaliation by embittered survivors for generations. Atonement points a way out of that dark future.

Israel and the United States, the source of 70% of Israel's arms, need to make amends, (not the United Nations, not the E), or humanitarian organizations), by, at the very least, restoring Gaza to conditions that existed there before the Israeli military occupation began in 1967.

Of course, spending the hundreds of billions, perhaps trillions, it will take to remove unexploded ordnance, restore civilian infrastructure, agriculture, and the environment in Gaza will not bring back the dead or remove the need to care for the long-term injured. But, if coupled with an apology for Israeli efforts since 1948 to expel, oppress, and exterminate Palestinians, reconstruction could usher in a healthy relationship between Palestinians and Israelis.

In a similar way, American apologies for our crimes and complicity in those of our proxies like Israel, coupled with reparations, could help heal relations with those whom we've wronged. Both the US and Israel could set examples for other nations by adopting a policy of atonement. Ω

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A Voice From the Bottom

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

In a pure democracy, decisions are made on the basis of majority rule. When the United States was founded, the wealthy white leaders feared the masses, so they opted for representative democracy, restricted voting to white men with property, and set up a government where states with smaller populations would receive the same representation in the US Senate as those from more populous states. They also created an un-elected Electoral College as the final arbiter over presidential elections. By the early 1800's, three-fifths of the enslaved population were counted toward apportioning seats in the House of Representatives, despite the fact that enslaved people could not vote, a rule that weighted the power of slave states.

After World War I, voting rights expanded to include women. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 made voting less racist and more fair. Unfortunately, early in this century, the Republican Party leaders, aware that their party tended to lose the popular vote, began to tilt the rules in their favor. When Republicans controlled the US Senate, Senator Mitch McConnell refused to allow votes to confirm Democratic President Obama's nominee, Merrick Garland, for the Supreme Court, a decision which allowed Donald Trump to appoint three justices, who later decided money was free speech, a ruling which decimated campaign finance laws. The Trump US Supreme Court gutted much of the Voting Rights Act and is now considering a case which would complete that job.

Meanwhile, at the grassroots level, Republicans worked tirelessly to make it more difficult for likely Democrats to vote. Despite all these machinations, Joe Biden still defeated Trump, who now works overtime to insure Republican domination is enshrined permanently.

Under Trump, any election which Republicans do not win is condemned, without evidence, as "rigged." Voting rights shrink almost daily. Partisan and racist gerrymandering is in full swing. And Trump is working to hold a new national census that does not count non-citizens. Despite the fact that the Constitution is clear when and how each census is to be conducted in order to determine representation in Congress, Trump is banking on his cronies in the Supreme Court to let him diminish the representation of Democratic states that have high number of migrants.

When you put it all together, the Republican Party and Donald Trump are doing everything in their power to diminish the number and electoral power of eligible Democratic voters, to corrupt elections with billions of dollars from wealthy donors, and to weight election outcomes heavily in their favor. Their actions make the corruption of Democrats in Tammany

Hall, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, look like small potatoes.

As formidable as all these efforts to rig elections are, the nomination of a Democratic Socialist for mayor of New York City stands as a warning sign that the hurdles may not be high enough to overcome popular disapproval of Republican policies. If a practicing Muslim and critic of the wealthy and Israel, like Zohran Kwame Mamdani, can win a primary against better-funded and more conservative foes, who can say if gerrymandering, voting restrictions, and a new census will be enough to secure a Republican dynasty?

Herein lies the spectre of Trump watching the polls as the midterm congressional elections approach, and then, if it looks like Republicans will still lose, the President might declare a national emergency to "postpone" the elections indefinitely. If that sounds preposterous, remember that he declared an economic emergency in order to impose record tariffs on most nations, including long-time allies and friends. Court cases questioning the legality of declaring bogus emergencies have gone nowhere with their terminus likely to be before a Supreme Court so subservient to Trump that it would not surprise many to see it declare Trump dictator for life.

Please do not mistake this article for an appeal to elect Democrats. President Biden enabled Israel to commit genocide in Gaza. President Obama authorized a new wave of nuclear weapons. Every Democrat since Carter has overseen a widening wealth gap. Too many Democrats favor increased military spending and the gun lobby, while opposing efforts to confront the climate emergency and pass long-overdue immigration reform. But if there is to be any hope of electing women and men who champion social justice and peace, a level playing field needs to be built.

Here at the very bottom of the political pile, at the grass roots level, hope remains that voices against corruption will not be silenced. Educated and determined people are turning out in large numbers at regular rallies for justice and peace in Worcester and all over the US. Activists are less and less likely to be seduced by the lies of any politician.

Catholic Workers have long favored a revolution of the heart, initiating change without relying on hreats by politicians, judges, police, or armies. We stand apart from partisan politics while simultaneously refusing to do our very best to make the world a more just and loving place. Our personalism does not prohibit us from denouncing political corruption and standing shoulder to should with broad coalitions for peace and justice.

My friend Michael True always said that a determined grass roots movement is always stronger than a well-funded top-down scheme. Let's prove him right.Ω

Japan

(Continued from Page 1)

well as prelates from the US, Japan, South Korea, and the papal nuncio to Japan, Francisco Escalante Molino.

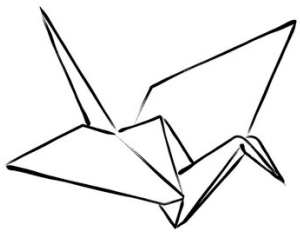
Our days were a mix of Mass, academic symposiums on Catholic ethics and nuclear weapons, interfaith services, and visits to museums and historic sites. It was an itinerary that allowed the past, especially the experiences of the *hibakusha*, to inform and inspire present-day action.

At the symposiums held at Elizabeth University in Hiroshima, the Japanese bishops spoke explicitly about the inhumanity of nuclear weapons and declared their commitment to nuclear abolition. In an address entitled "Our New Moment: Renewing Catholic Teaching on War and Peace," Cardinal Robert McElroy of Washington, DC, a moral theologian, called for prioritizing "nonviolent action as the primary framework for Catholic teaching on war and peace," and reiterated Pope Francis' directive to always analyze war from the lens of its victims. Nuclear deterrence, once viewed by the Church as an interim ethic, merely preserved the nuclear status quo, he said, and had to be rejected. Afternoon lectures in dimly-lit auditoriums are typically a snooze fest, but I leapt to my feet, whooped, and applauded after the cardinal's stirring call to action:

"If our gathering here today is to mean anything, it must mean that in fidelity to all whose lives were destroyed or savagely damaged on August 6th eighty years ago, we refuse to live in such a world of nuclear proliferation and risk-taking. We will resist, we will organize, we will pray, we will not cease, until the world's nuclear arsenals have been destroyed."

"The language of the dead is charged with fire beyond the language of the living," wrote the poet T.S. Eliot. This proved true in Hiroshima and Nagasaki where the effects of the atomic bombings are recorded in meticulous and poignant detail at each city's Atomic Bomb Museum. In Nagasaki, I was horrified to learn the US military documented in real time their atomic experiment on the Japanese. Bockscar, the plane that unleashed a novel plutonium weapon on the city carried two pilots, one to bomb and one to film. After the weapon's release, the pilots dropped small parachutes carrying equipment to measure the weapon's effect which inhabitants of villages 12 kilometers from the epicenter later discovered. Imagine discovering your destruction is the subject of someone's study! At the museums, the "guinea pigs" in the story of the atom bomb asserted their humanness, chronicling in detail how the bomb was made, when the decision was made to use it, and how people died. Bodies were incinerated from the bomb's intense heat (3,000 degrees centigrade at the epicenter) or smashed by typhoon-like winds, or weakened from within through radiation.

Like today's news reports from Gaza, the black and white photos of smiling children taken before their incineration, the glass cases displaying charred clothing, partially melted rosaries, blistered metal pots and temple bells, the exhibits of railway bridges mangled from the heat, the drawings of inflamed bodies, the dispassionate record of destruction and loss describe an obliteration that is impossible to fathom.



The caption for one exhibit read:

[Mr. Miyazaki's] four children died instantly at the family home near the hypocenter. Mr. Miyazaki rushed home, but could not find their bodies. All that remained was this lump of clay hardened like rock.

And yet, in Hiroshima as well as Nagasaki, I was reminded of the irrepressible persistence of life. How remembrance is essential to renewal and rejuvenation. At 8:15 AM on August 6th, the minute of detonation, I stood on the bridge overlooking the Motoyasu River where so many atomic bomb victims plunged to relieve their burning bodies and, along with the hundreds of tourists and local pedestrians around me, observed a moment of silence. Every year, Hiroshima officials release a flock of white doves at the conclusion of their formal August 6th commemoration. I watched the birds swoop past the Atomic Bomb Dome, landmark of the bombing's epicenter, before disappearing into Hiroshima's skyline. The doves represent the prevailing spirit of peace, and the sight of them winging over the river reassured the soul.

All that day, Hiroshima's Peace Park was abuzz with appeals for peace. Buddhist monks chanted and drummed. People held open-air prayer services for peace. Buskers performed throughout the park. I sang along with one man who had changed the words of Woody Guthrie's "Down By the Riverside" to an appeal for Israel to stop bombing Gaza. Near the statue honoring Sadako Sasako, school children told the story of the girl who folded more than a thousand peace cranes before she died of leukemia caused by radiation released from the bomb. A local media team interviewed any willing passer-by for their thoughts on peace and disarmament. Like many park visitors, we rang the Peace Bell and wrote messages of peace on paper lanterns that we floated upon the river later that night. Once a place of immense pain, the Motoyasu is annually transformed into a conduit of hope with this ritual. It was beautiful to see thousands of colored lights bobbing on the water, each one carrying a personal prayer for peace.

In Nagasaki, I observed a similar transformation of violence, one created in a specifically Catholic context. For four centuries, the city's Catholics endured religious persecution and exile from their fellow Japanese. During a period of relative freedom of religion, they built Urakami Cathedral, one of the largest in northeast Asia. Because of the community's poverty, the building took decades to construct. Then came Christian pilots from America bearing a novel form of expulsion — a plutonium weapon dropped 500 meters from Nagasaki's beloved church. Of the 12,000 parishioners, 8,500 immediately died. "The parish was scorched," a pamphlet about the cathedral drily recounts.

Who among us has knelt before a crucifix of a headless, partially limbless

Jesus? Or venerated the body-less, charred head of the Virgin Mary, her eyes nothing but blackened sockets that make her appear eerily blind? These are the objects of devotion for the congregants at the rebuilt Urakami Cathedral. Retrieved from the rubble of the bombed church, the religious statues have center stage in the sanctuary and side chapel.

"O Bombed Mary, O Bombed Jesus" sang Nagasaki's Archbishop Peter Michiaki Nakamura during the cathedral's Mass of Peace offered on the evening of August 9th, the anniversary of the city's atomic bombing. After the final blessing, the church's overflow crowd processed with priests and bishops behind an ornate palanquin bearing a replica of the war-marred Madonna down to Hypocenter Park. There they placed her in front of a remnant of the bombed cathedral's outer wall positioned close to the monument marking the epicenter. Encircled with bamboo luminaries, Our Blessed Mother looked quite lovely.

The Marian procession to Hypocenter Park is an annual event for the cathedral's parishioners, one some might view as a macabre obsession with the past. For me, the torch-lit walk to the park and the placement of the statue's head at the epicenter of an annihilation articulated a faith in the God of Love that cannot be extinguished. We need such a faith to move us away from the death addiction that nuclear weapons represent.

"The horror of war is often understood in terms of its destructive effects— severe burns, the loss of limbs, and so on. But even more terrifying is the fact that human beings are capable of becoming this cruel," said Bishop Goro Matsuura of Nagoya during the August 5th symposium in Hiroshima. "The very act of developing weapons [for mass killing] is itself an expression of this cruelty. The atomic bomb stands at the pinnacle of such inhumane weapons of slaughter."

We made our pilgrimage to Japan during a perilous time. The Russian/Ukranian war, Israel's genocide in Gaza with its corollary evisceration of international law, the Indo-Pakistani flare-up last May, and the growing reliance on AI-driven warfare, are just some of the current events increasing the likelihood of a nuclear exchange happening somewhere in the world. Meanwhile, the Trump administration contines Obama's nuclear modernization program at full throttle and madly proposes building a Golden Dome — missile defense shield —to keep "American citizens safe." The prevalence of such enormous, technological violence can shake one's faith in the God of life. Perhaps we humans are destined to self-destruct, after all.

Japan, the only country subjected to atomic bombings, offered other revelations. For Charlie, the epiphany came the night we floated lanterns on the Motoyasu River. While he has advocated for nuclear disarmament most of his life, he never *truly* believed that disarmament would happen. He was thirteen years old at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Its terror convinced him that he, and the world, would end in a mushroom cloud. But at the sight of the thousands of floating lanterns, Charlie realized, as he put it, that "we would win this thing. We will get rid of nuclear weapons, because human beings want peace. They want this world to continue."

I too have returned from our Japan journey with an unexpected hope seeded by so many experiences there. For all their horror, the nuclear weapons used in Japan could not blast away God, Our Creator. They could not eradicate people's ability to love or keep faith. The ginko trees in Hiroshima rejuvenated. Cities and cathedrals were rebuilt. The yearning for peace persisted as did life itself.

There is no denying the work ahead for nuclear abolition will be difficult. My time in Japan has energized a conviction that, in the end, we will win. Ω

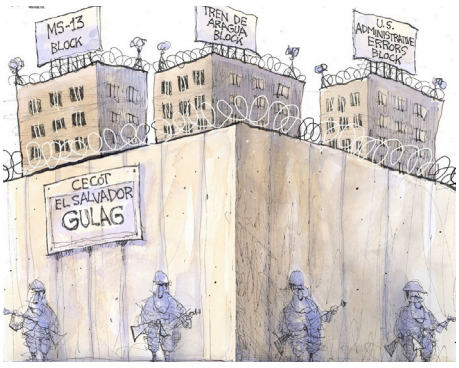
Salvadoran Mega Prison

by Wendy Leitner- Seiber

We are fond, in Catholic Worker circles, of noting our connection to a global family, the commonalities that connect us across borders. But as citizens of the US empire, we have much in common that we wish we did not, for our neighbors' sake. One example is the current regime in El Salvador, with many unsettling connections to our own, as I discovered on a trip this summer.

In July, I traveled with a group from Saint Vincent's Church in Philadelphia to our Salvadoran sister parish of 35 years. Our hosts had arranged several meetings to help us understand the current political and environmental context. We saw many connections between the Trump administration's policy of detentions and deportations and Salvadoran President Bukele's three years of actions against his people. A particularly striking example is the story of the "mega-prison" known as CECOT (Terrorism Confinement Center), which may serve as a foreshadowing of plans for large detention centers underway in the US.

One day, our delegation went to a town



located directly next to where the mega-prison was built in the San Vicente region. We heard how the government chose a piece of land important to the indigenous people, at the foot of a sacred mountain. Farmers were forced from their land, and locals described a rushed six months of

(Continued on Page 6)

Mega Prison

(Continued from Page 5)

construction with devastating impacts, including a vastly increased military presence that has frightened the residents of these rural towns.

A man I will call "Eduardo" told us that this was an area with little pollution prior to 2022, and people used the river to bathe, drink, water crops, and water their animals. He described what followed this way: "Once prisoners started arriving, they began dumping into two rivers. We began to see the water turn dark and gray. Now all our produce, crops, and even milk from our community's cows are considered contaminated. No one will buy them. We only drink bottled water now, another impact on the environment…."

A woman told us, "We used to fish from these creeks. Since CECOT arrived, we see so much froth it looks like a bubble bath. We thought it was only gray water, which was bad enough, but there are signs of raw sewage, and people have been found to have E. Coli. We believe, from satellite pictures, that the water treatment plant they built is too small for all the people there."

Another day, we gathered with representatives of MOVIR, (the Movement of Victims of the Regime), a human rights group that draws attention to the more than 80,000 Salvadorans detained since 2022. MOVIR formed in response to the government's "state of exception" three years ago, which, in the name of reducing gang violence, has allowed for rounding people up and holding them without charges. Since that time, the regime has increased pressure on all who defend human rights. Groups doing legal defense have fled, protests have all but stopped, and journalists and human rights leaders are fleeing the country.

We met Felipa, a mother who described with deep emotion the experience of having her son detained for three years. Families are often not told where their loved ones are imprisoned or even if they are alive. There are reports of severe overcrowding, torture, lack of health care, and other inhumane conditions in CECOT, with little access for human rights organizations.

This is the same place that our president openly admires, both for its role in "cleaning up the streets" and as a place for him to send unwanted deportees—perhaps soon US citizens as well. "The homegrowns are next. You've got to build about five more places," he said in an April press conference. Reports say the US has promised El Salvador $6 million to imprison deportees with more funds to come over time.

The situation in El Salvador should move us to outrage and action. As has always been true, we are deeply connected to the suffering of our neighbors to the south. And just like the activists of decades past, we are challenged by stories of resilience and resistance from the Salvadoran people. May we respond to their calls for solidarity and action. Ω

A Ray of Hope

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

In life there are moments
that stick in the mind,
remain ever vivid,
refuse to unwind.

I had one near Hebron
a long long time past,
while leading a peace team
being shot at and gassed.

A settler pulled over
in a van that was wide
with his wife to his right
and five children inside.

We knew he's observant
from his kippah and tassel
the man approached us
to scold and to hassle.

Without interruptions,
we let the man shout,
while his family looking on
wondering, "What this about?"

"You want Jews to be killed!"
"You want us to die!"
When we said we were peaceful,
he yelled, "You know that'a lie!"

To our credit I'd say
we all stayed pretty calm
and offered whatever
we hoped might be balm.

But he wouldn't have it,
bought nothing we'd sell
and told us quite clearly,
"You're all going to Hell!"

But when he was finished,
got back in his seat,
one of the children did
something quite sweet.

I felt for those children,
who must love their dad,
to see him so angry
to watch him go mad.

As he pulled away quickly,
a child turned to us
to wave and to smile,
to counter the fuss.

I think of that girl
how she managed to cope
and send us a message
of love and of hope. Ω

Letters

Hi, Scott,
Good paper, great work— and, of course, it'll never lead the 6 o'clock news. "If it doesn't bleed, it doesn't lead." We have to find and harvest the nuggets of good, positive news—and it's worth the effort. People are good. God loves us all.

Tom Malloy
East Providence, Rhode Island

Hi Scott,

I sympathize with your memory loss you talked about in your latest *Catholic Radical*. At age 71, I honestly wonder if I'm slowly slipping down the road to dementia. More often than not, I can't remember the name of someone I haven't seen and I know reasonably well in even a few weeks, especially if I don't know them that well. As for immediate short term memory, I go to do something and if I get distracted even a few seconds, it's usually gone. Sometimes it comes back, but not always. Being at the computer is a great place to forget things!

I leave myself reminders both written and digital. My place is full of to do notes written not in ink but large letters with magic marker.

As my brother said, old age is about letting go. What could be more terrifying than letting go of one's mind? Humiliating but hopefully eventually humbling. Anyone who is reasonably smart will probably have lots of pride of intellect. I know that from how I judge others so easily and like a bad habit. Of course, because I pride myself on honesty, I judge myself just as harshly. But that doesn't help me or anyone else!

Forgive me, Lord, for I am a proud and foolish man. (The tempter is subtle. He will even make me proud of that insight!)

I appreciate your gratitude in the midst of troubles. That's hard for me.
Peace & blessings,

Paul del Junco
Toronto, Canada

*Editor's Note: Thank you , Paul, for your humble words of wisdom. Clearly, Job was right when, in the face of extreme misfortune, he said: "**Naked I came into the world, and naked I'll leave. The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.**"*

Dear Editors:
Your latest issue founds its way down here to the Caribbean town of Ponce, Puerto Rico.

The Roman families maternal roots are here through our mother Celia Romero.

I am here on a short term visit helping to rebuild and restore housing in, around and near a very small, farming cooperative owned by some cousins.

Mazel tov on another fantastic issue.

A loving god does NOT bomb children. But bullies like Netanyahu and Hamas/PLO terrorists do.

Advice from a law enforcement officer was a holy shit. I didn't know that story. Nice to know that there are still people like that on the inside.

I am going to send copies of "Hypocrisy" and "Fiscal Hypocrites" to the plush Madison Avenue digs of our ecclesiastical high prince Cardinal Timothy Dolan.

He is a lost cause, but I get a sweet sensation of *schadenfreude* worthy of my Brooklyn roots thinking he might actually peruse it while his housekeeper brings him a cup of tea.

I treasure you-can't-take-it-with-you as a loving homage to the eccentric characters in and around the Catholic Worker.

Gene Roman
New York, New York

Catholic Worker Calendar

October 8 & 27, November 5-19 - Evening Prayer: Please join us for prayer with Taizé chant. 52 Mason Street. 7 PM. Refreshments to follow.

GIVE WATER TO THE THIRSTY
CLOTHE THE NAKED
SHELTER THE HOMELESS
VISIT THE SICK
VISIT THE IMPRISONED
FEED THE HUNGRY
ARTWORK BY SARAH FULLER, SEE MORE AT SARAHFULLERART.COM

Mason Street Musings

Our guest J. leaves this morning. After supper last night, he thanked us for his stay, his eyes filling with tears. "We did very little," I said. I have been overly busy the past two months and consequently meager in the hospitality offered to our guests. A "hello," but no "How are you?" A home-cooked meal, but no time for conversation. The afternoon J showed up at the door, I was on some writing deadline, so I had him wait on the front porch until I could attend to him."I understand writing deadlines," he graciously said when I finally returned. Dignified in demeanor, he recounted his own catastrophes calmly: The recent hospitalization for a heart attack. The precarious months staying in an "adequate" apartment that he bartered in exchange for work doing property maintenance.

"We can give you a bed for the weekend," I said then extended the hospitality another ten days, which was enough time for J to find a more permanent place. Even though what we did was so little, I am grateful we could provide him a stepping stone to something better.

Grace Duffy, now Sliwoski

Our guest C's circumstances are another matter altogether. The morning he phoned the house, he told me he had spent the previous night in a graveyard. "I never in my life thought I would spend a night in a cemetery," he said. But he had to leave the apartment where he was saying because the people there were asking him to lead a sinful life which he didn't want to do. He believed in Jesus.

Our guests R and J, who have lived with us for years, occupy two of the upstairs bedrooms. Because so many people call requesting shelter, we try to keep the remaining beds for emergency hospitality. A stay of two weeks, we say. It's rarely enough time for what people need.

C is a young, able-bodied man, a person with a good work history and an employer awaiting his return. But he comes from another country and must pay $800 to renew his work permit – a whopping fee for a service industry worker. The process to do so has been hellish. One social service agency is covering a portion of the fee, and there is an application in process to waive the remainder. But it will take immigration anywhere from three to five months, at best, to process the receipt, C's lawyer said. Without it, C. cannot work legally.

"What if a person worked under the table and paid for the permit with cash (bank accounts are complicated for the undocumented)? Would that expedite things?" I asked. No, the kind lawyer said. Because of the Trump administration's cuts in immigration administration, the wait for a receipt is still three to five months. So C. hangs in limbo, his predicament another cruel detail of this hideous period in our country.

We need a General Strike, says my friend Joseph Gerson, a mass mobilization to shutdown the repressive machinery that is crushing so many people. We, at 52 Mason Street, need money, Scott tells me. After we pay the bill for publication of this issue of the newsletter, the house bank account will have enough for a week of groceries. Thank you in advance for keeping us going. Ω

Claire

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